

## **Dragons**

Years ago my son and I were hiking in some woods near the town that we lived in. As usual, my son went off by himself to play in that imaginary world that only children have the privilege of knowing...a world that we as adults leave behind.

As he went over the next hill, I as usual sat down at the top of the same hill and watched him in his world. With a long stick in-hand, my son went about the task of slaying his dragons. As I watched him swinging that imaginary sword and clamoring over fallen tree limbs, I tried to imagine what he saw in his minds-eye.

As I watched my son, I remembered times that I had been privileged to be in that world of imagination. I suspect I must have fought a thousand dragons in the woods and fields that surrounded my home. I can still remember with clarity the trails and creeks that were my domain. A domain that now seems so small, yet seemed endless for me.

As adults, we sometimes try to get back to that world of imagination that we remember as children but we can't. All we can do is watch with envy as our children are allowed passage into a world that we as adults left behind.

Recently my son and I went for another walk in some near-by woods. This time he stayed with me and we talked about world events, school and his desire to join the Marines after high school.

As we came up on a bend in the trail, I stopped and pretended to tie my boot laces tighter. As my son kept walking, I felt a great sadness come over me. I realized that my son was leaving that imaginary world of dragons for the real dragons of this world.

As I came around the bend, I saw my son climbing up a tree that had fallen against a hill to slay just one more dragon. As I sat down and watched, I realized that as adults we all leave our imaginary dragons behind. For my son that time was not quite yet. For today... he had one more dragon to slay. For today... he was still my little boy.

**C. V. Egan**

**April 4, 2000**